

A public information session was held Thursday, March 10, at 7 p.m. in the Rahway City Library in which two city councilmen, along with approximately 30 residents, were informed about the New Jersey ALB Cooperative Eradication Program, the recent expansion of the Middlesex/Union ALB quarantine zone in Rahway and the need to cut down approximately 1,400 more trees in the city due to the expansion.

Program officials from the USDA, NJDA and New Jersey Forest Service answered residents' questions about such things as the timetable for replacing trees that are cut down and the process for being notified that trees on their properties are to be removed. The residents were also asked to support the program and to get the word out to their neighbors about identifying infested trees. Many positive comments were received from residents after the meeting about their understanding of why the program is necessary and their willingness to cooperate with the tree removal.

The meeting was covered by local media including: the Newark Star-Ledger, the Home News Tribune, the Woodbridge Sentinel, the Rahway Progress, New Jersey's Gardener News and New Brunswick WCTC-AM News Radio.

As of March 10, 2005, 2,288 trees have been removed from the Middlesex/Union counties ALB infestation site. Of those, 483 were infested host trees and 1,805 were high-risk exposed host trees.

Crews continued to work removing trees this week in the residential areas of Carteret and the Avenel section of Woodbridge Township.

Currently, 13 program personnel from USDA APHIS PPQ, NJDA, NJ Forest Service are performing survey, control and regulatory activities. Seven program personnel continue to perform survey and regulatory activities in the Jersey City Quarantine.

Eight USDA Forest Service Smokejumpers started working this week surveying trees in the Middlesex/Union ALB infestation site.

Barry Emens, USDA-APHIS NJ ALB Director conducted interviews with Gabe Gluck, reporter with the Newark Star- Ledger. Emens and Carl Schulze, Director of the NJDA's Division of Plant Industry were interviewed by Pat Miller, reporter with the Woodbridge Sentinel, on the tree removal process being conducted in the Middlesex/Union counties ALB infestation site and the need to remove an additional 1,400 trees in Rahway

Program personnel will remain on-site during the tree removal process to address concerns from homeowners and to ensure operations continue to run smoothly.